

Research on Elite Capture under the Background of Digital Rural Construction

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Abstract: *Digital rural construction is an important driving force to promote rural revitalization and common prosperity, and the project to the countryside is an important way to achieve common prosperity. However, under the background of digital rural construction, there is still the problem of elite capture in the project to the countryside. By analyzing the participants, expression forms and influencing factors of elite capture, the governance strategies are put forward.*

Keywords: Elite capture, Project to the countryside, Digital rural construction, Governance strategy.

1. Research Background

Since the rural revitalization and digital rural construction strategy was put forward, relevant national policy documents such as the Key Points of Digital Rural Development in 2023 have supported projects to the countryside to promote rural development. Project to the countryside is an important way to promote rural revitalization and drive the rapid development of rural society, and an important supporting force to comprehensively promote rural revitalization. However, in the process of project to the countryside, it also brings the problem of elite capture for agriculture and rural areas. But from the point of the practice of digital rural construction, the project in the process of the countryside contains complex interest relationship, under the background of digital rural construction, elite capture produced some and rural revitalization goals and digital rural construction problems, not only affect the project to the countryside common boost common prosperity, also hindered the rural digital transformation and governance efficiency of orderly healthy development process. Therefore, guiding projects to the countryside in an orderly manner is related to rural revitalization and the overall construction of a strong agricultural country.

2. The Question of

Using rural e-commerce platform and logistics system, The concept of "elite capture" (Elite Capture) first appeared in the field of economics, and then gradually developed into political science, sociology and other fields. Foreign research started earlier, which can be traced back to Manser Olson's paradigm of "interest group capture" [1]. Bourdieu Believe that the reason for elite capture is that elite groups exert their influence through moral condemnation and symbolic power [2]. In China, the research on elite capture started late, and mostly concentrated in the projects of poverty alleviation, benefiting farmers, public service and other fields under the background of targeted poverty alleviation, mainly focusing on resource allocation [3] and multiple elite capture [4]; the resource allocation in targeted poverty alleviation projects [5]; the targeting of subsistence allowance projects in public service projects [6]. However, after the historic elimination of absolute poverty in China, the focus of "agriculture, rural areas and farmers" issues has been shifted to promoting rural revitalization, and there is also the phenomenon of elite

capture in the process of rural revitalization. With the implementation of the digital rural construction strategy, the project is no longer to specific groups, but with the help of digital application in agriculture and rural economic and social development, accelerate the development of agricultural and rural modernization and transformation process, also more emphasis on achieving common prosperity all farmers, the pursuit of a higher level, more long-term, more sustainable development.

Related research at home and abroad for the background of digital rural construction project to the countryside "elite capture" phenomenon laid a solid foundation, but the disadvantage is that about the digital country construction under the background of "elite capture" phenomenon of digital rural construction research less, for the background of "elite capture" participants, expression, influencing factors and governance countermeasures less, especially for how to deal with the digital rural construction background of "elite capture" research is not systematic. Therefore, based on the phenomenon of elite capture in the countryside and putting forward corresponding governance strategies, it is of great significance for promoting the transformation of rural digital transformation and the improvement of governance efficiency.

3. Characteristics of the Elite Capture Phenomenon

3.1 Participants: Diversification

Overall, if the digital project to the countryside field as a social network system, digital rural construction under the background of the elite capture contains multiple subject, can be divided into local government, ordinary villagers, elite and technical elite, elite subject including political elite, economic elite, social elite, each subject in the process of digital project to the countryside plays an important role. In the process of digital projects going to the countryside, different types of elites may choose different behavioral characteristics to capture their interests by virtue of their resource endowment advantages. Political elite refers to the staff of the functional departments of governments at all levels with formal power, mainly refers to the cadres of the "two committees" of the village. They have greater discretion and have the possibility of taking advantage of the loopholes in the system, directly or

indirectly seek benefits to maximize their own interests, and obtain a balance between normal work and resource rent-seeking. Economic elites are intelligent and capable rural entrepreneurs and large operators who have a predominant position in the economy. These "rich people" may rely on their own resources and relationships to intervene in village governance to obtain benefits. Social elites are people with high prestige and strong power in rural communities, including highly respected clan and capable people. They may occupy and intercept project resources by virtue of their informal power and influence. Technical elites are technical talents who master digital technology under the background of digital rural construction, and are representatives of new elites. Generally, they have high education and master digital tools and technologies, and have a driving role in promoting digital projects to the countryside. Technical elites have the ability to master digital tools and technologies and data analysis, as well as a strong sense of team, which can bring stronger impetus to rural revitalization.

When the government, elite subjects, technical elites and other subjects constitute the network system, and there is no direct connection between the subjects of different structures, there will be structural holes. Due to the contradictions between the subject, such as technical elite and elite subject to form a new elite alliance, use of digital technology and elite subject information advantage of project interests capture, local governments and village cadres and village cadres and villagers double principal-agent contradiction, cause a large number of existing in the social network system structure hole, and structure hole fill will promote the subject has not yet form a benign cooperation, mutual cooperation relationship. Because the digital country is associated with network, informatization and digital application in agricultural and rural economic and social development, and the improvement of farmers modern information skills and endogenous agriculture and rural modernization development and transformation process, so the technical elite of digital technology in the project to the countryside is particularly important, therefore, technical elite and existing elite subject and form the elite alliance as structure hole intermediary is the best choice.

3.2 Expression Form: Diversification

The characteristics of the current digital rural construction are mainly reflected in three aspects: First, it expands the governance space of the rural society. Digital rural construction applies information technology to the rural field, expands the rural public space and promotes the integration of rural space. Second, it expands the governance body of rural society. Digital rural construction integrates the interest demands of multiple subjects through Internet technology, unimpeded the communication channels of subjects, and lays the foundation for building a pattern of diversified rural co-governance. Third, the digital rural construction of rural society is based on the building of a grassroots digital governance platform, and builds the network infrastructure covering rural areas, thus forming an interconnected and efficient communication network.

The expression form of "elite capture" in digital projects going to the countryside is mainly interest capture and digital

exclusion. Interest capture is a phenomenon that is aimed for the elite alliance. In the process of the project going to the countryside, the elite alliance suffers bad consequences because the elite uses its own advantages to seek its own interests. The original intention of digital projects to the countryside is to promote rural revitalization and common prosperity, but the elite alliance, in order to get more project funds and project resources in the digital projects, makes use of technological advantages and their own advantages to capture interests, resulting in social differentiation and aggravating the Matthew effect. For ordinary farmers, the most intuitive manifestation is the low quality of farmers, that is, ordinary farmers have poor access to the use of digital technology and the depth of the use of shallow, and have not been able to fully enjoy the digital dividend released by digital technology. According to the Survey and Analysis Report of China's Rural Digital Literacy under the Background of Rural Revitalization Strategy released by the Informatization Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the digital literacy score of rural residents was only 18.6,57% lower than the average and the lowest among all occupational types. It can be seen that farmers' digital literacy is an important reason for the capture of elites to the countryside.

3.3 Influencing Factor

In the background of digital rural construction, the emergence of elite capture in the rural project is not an accidental factor, but a profound influencing factor. Digital exclusion, concept identity, digital formalism and so on are all important factors affecting the emergence of elite capture in digital projects to the countryside.

With the development of digital rural construction, Technical elite have played an important role in sending digital projects to the countryside, When jointly forming an elite alliance with the village talents and village cadres, It also promotes the integration of digital technology and the contacts and information resources mastered by rural elites, Further consolidating the position and power of the elite in the project to the countryside, And in the digital project to the countryside, with the help of technical elites to control the benefits of digital projects to meet their own pursuit of more interests, Even by controlling the digital technology, With digital technology firmly in the hands of elite alliances, At the same time, due to digital rejection, self-exclusion, financial exclusion and skill exclusion, As a result, ordinary villagers are excluded from the interest chain due to their low digital literacy, Increase the rural social differentiation.

Due to the existence of local culture, village cadres and the principal-the relationship between the villagers and agent is largely based on geographical relationship and blood relationship, village cadres is directly elected by the villagers, on behalf of the villagers, manage the village public affairs, entrust the villagers to the village cadres, villagers and village cadres will form the "principal-agent" relationship, it also laid a foundation for the masses. Due to their good mass base, strong communication and coordination ability, and policy understanding ability, the village cadres are also easy to communicate with the government, and then undertake the projects outsourced by the government, and become the development leaders of digital projects to the countryside. In

addition, after the digital project into the village, the project operation of each link need the support of digital technology, village cadres with the first contact technicians and good communication skills to entrust technical personnel to provide technical support for digital project development, in the process, ordinary villagers recognition of the elite alliance, elite capture is the more serious.

Digital rural construction originates from the reform of information technology, and is the organic coupling of digital technology and rural society. As an important starting point to realize the rural revitalization strategy, it is also a political task for the local government to complete. However, in the real development, the top-level design and the grass-roots practice are disconnected. Due to achievements need of incentives and pressure, lead to local government universal pursuit of short-term results, under the background of digital rural construction for rural digital transformation, the cadre residency and the introduction of technical personnel "technocratic" sinking to the country and spend heavily to build digital project platform is not applied, excessive pursuit of pay attention to digital project platform input and light output, driven motivation, often lead to project execution alienation and digital formalism, in local financial burden also lead to digital projects to the countryside into "technical fall".

4. Elite Capture and Governance Countermeasures under the Background of Digital Rural Construction

At present, the phenomenon of "elite capture" in the process of digital projects going to the countryside, especially the elite alliance of village cadres, talented people and technical elites to capture the interests of digital projects, which not only deviates from the original intention of projects going to the countryside, but also infringes on the vital interests of farmers. Therefore, finding the countermeasures for the phenomenon of elite capture under the background of digital rural construction is conducive to promoting rural digital transformation.

4.1 Make the Numbers More Inclusive

Digital countryside is built for farmers. As the key actor of digital rural construction, the level of digital literacy of farmers has become an important restriction factor affecting rural digital governance. Digital literacy is the villagers in the digital age to participate in the digital project to the countryside necessary quality, but also release the key elements of digital rural life, to improve the farmers subject digital literacy and modern management level, speed up the cultivating a high-quality professional team, is the core of driving rural digital governance, to activate rural life improve rural digital governance performance has important practical significance. As a key actor, the government should first formulate an action plan to improve the digital literacy of villagers, and publicize and educate the digital technology of ordinary farmers. Secondly, constantly improve the construction of rural digital infrastructure, promote the application of digital platforms, and pay attention to the output of digital platforms. Finally, cadres with good information literacy should be continuously selected to sink into villages while avoiding the formation of "technocrats",

and organize villagers to expand the contact channels of digital media by means of training and guidance, improve their cognitive level of digital media, and improve the digital literacy of farmers.

4.2 We Will Strengthen Digital Technology Oversight

The supervision of digital technology needs to standardize the application of technology to avoid the risk of "technology doing evil". As a tool and means, digital technology itself does not have autonomy and potential risks, and the derivative risks come from the will of the subject of technology use and the constraint validity of institutional arrangement. A great reason for the capture of elites in digital projects to the countryside is from the elite alliance's use of digital technology to "do evil", Using digital technology to maximize your self-interest, To avoid the possible risk of "technological evil" in digital projects in the countryside, one side, An institutionalized restraint mechanism should be established, The boundary used by the calibration technique, Guide the application of technology from the institutional level to return to the instrumental standard; on the other hand, Technology management risk assessment and prevention mechanism should be established and improved, Establish and improve the emergency plan system for technical management crisis, We will strengthen legislative supervision and institutions of digital technology, Safety and ethical education for the technical elites, Effectively prevent digital projects in the countryside in the "technical evil".

4.3 Break Down on the Digital Formalism

Digital formalism is a new variant of formalism in the digital era, and it is the "stumbling block" and "obstacle" in the construction of digital countryside. The main representation of digital formalism is that digital platform attaches more importance to construction than operation and maintenance, digital transformation attaches more importance to process than effectiveness, data governance attaches more importance to quantity than quality, and trace management attaches more importance than results. The origin of digital formalism is not only the distortion and dislocation of ideas, but also related to individual opportunism, the imperfect supervision and evaluation mechanism and the characteristics of digital technology itself. Digital rural construction is a long-term difficult system engineering, can't happen overnight, digital project to the countryside need digital technology, therefore, to reasonable construction of all kinds of digital governance platform, pay attention to integrated use, no digital formalism, resource intensive and efficient utilization as the guidance, on the basis of local resources, on the basis of scientific measure input and output the proportion of platform construction. In view of the same work content in the region, to avoid the repeated construction of platforms at all levels, such as provinces, cities, counties and townships, and to avoid the waste of resources and potential corruption problems. For the existing platforms, they should be reformed in combination with the needs of digital projects, and standardized integration. In particular, data sharing channels among various platforms should be opened up, and the existing resource value should be explored and data barriers should be broken to the maximum.

5. Conclusion

With the depth of information technology and digital rural construction, digital rural construction is the trend of The Times, although the current digital rural construction facing revealed by the elite capture digital rejection, formalism reality, from the digital inclusive improve ordinary farmers literacy, strengthen the supervision of digital technology, specification "technology" evil, break the barriers of digital, crack digital rural construction under the background of elite capture. In addition, the government should also constantly reflect on the boundary of technology application in the construction of digital countryside, and also think about how to establish and implement reasonable system norms, so as to avoid or solve the negative impact of technology in social governance. Technical elites should also apply digital technology to the whole process of digital project construction, provide a diversified "test ground" for the application of digital technology, and help the elimination of urban-rural development gap and the development of digital rural prosperity community.

On a deep level, the phenomenon of elite capture reflects the paradox in the policy design and implementation level of projects going to the countryside under the background of digital rural construction. On the one hand, the project to the countryside provides the smooth channel and mechanism to promote the digital rural construction efficiently and accurately, and the project is the starting point of the policy design, the effective connection and organic integration of the country and farmers, digital technology and the reintegration of the rural society and the reconstruction of modern digital governance order. How to achieve a balance between the two tests the practice of the government, elite subjects and ordinary farmers. Then, how to exogenous digital information technology, effectively embedded into the deep rural social structure and digital rural future development direction, how to go the last kilometer to the countryside, how to realize the digital technology and effective interaction of rural society, and promote rural digital governance new system construction and modern management ability, become crack elite capture dilemma after promoting the digital rural construction and important modernization of rural governance.

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